



Goehring defends North Dakota's pesticide inspection program

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BISMARCK – Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring says a report issued by the U.S. Office of Inspector General (OIG) implicating North Dakota in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 8's failure to ensure that Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act inspections are fully implemented in the state is misleading and disappointing.

"I feel like we've been thrown under the bus," said Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring. "North Dakota inspectors have been routinely conducting producer establishment inspections, under state and federal law and authority, through a cooperative agreement with EPA to ensure there is no risk to human health and the environment."

Goehring also stated that the agreement does not specify these inspections are to be conducted with federal credentials.

Producer establishments are facilities where pesticides are manufactured, packaged, repackaged, labeled or relabeled.

The report came as a surprise to the North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA) since the state has an 86% pesticide compliance rate, the highest in the nation. North Dakota state inspectors use education compliance to ensure that state and federal laws meeting EPA requirements for compliance are met. North Dakota state inspectors conducted 918 pesticide inspections in 2014.

"There is a real disconnect between OIG and field level operators, like Region 8," said Goehring. "OIG should praise EPA Region 8's support of North Dakota's programs which have developed new and innovative ways of doing business by clarifying and assisting the regulated community with tools like the pollinator protection plan, improving pesticide label language, creating web-distributed labeling, and innovative regulatory models, to name a few."

NDDA will continue to provide pesticide education and outreach within the state of North Dakota and work with EPA to safeguard the sale and use of pesticides through inspection, registration and labeling.

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